REPORT OF THE
Twenty-third Annual Conference of the S.D.F.
April 10th, 11th and 12th, 1903.

The twenty-third Annual Conference of the Social-Democratic Federation was held in London, at Shoreditch Town Hall, Old Street, on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, the 10th, 11th and 12th of April, 1903.

Sixty-seven delegates attended to represent sixty-three branches, but in five cases the branches were for various reasons disqualified, so that the branches represented at the Conference numbered only fifty-eight and their delegates sixty-two. These branches and their delegates were as follows:—

London (in or near):—Battersea, D. Carmichael and G. Steer; Bermondsey, C. Ince; Bethnal Green, E. E. Hunter; Bow and Bromley, A. Palmer; Brixton, W. J. Grafton; Canning Town, A. Hayday; Central, G. Belt; Chelsea and Fulham, R. Andrews; Clerkenwell, J. Shirras; East London (Jewish), B. Kahan; Edmonton, B. Pidgeon; Hackney and Kingsland, E. C. Fairchild; Islington, W. Cluse; Kensal Town and Paddington, A. W. Harder; Kentish Town, M. Short; Marylebone, J. P. Lloyd; Mile End, L. Colman; North Lambeth, G. Sutherland; Peckham and Dulwich, H. Neumann; Plaistow, John Jones; Shoreditch, R. Kendall and G. W. Patterson; Southwark, S. Eden; Stoke Newington, E. G. Raven; Stratford, W. G. Simons; Tottenham, J. Ellison; Tooting, A. Oldland; Walthamstow, C. Buck; Watford, A. Gray; West Ham Central, H. J. Hawkins Willesden, E. Withers.

England (except London and district):—Accrington, G. H. Crayford; Birkenhead, W. Duggan; Birmingham, W. F. Holliday; Blackburn (Central), H. Dawson and E. West; Blackburn (St. Paul's), J. Smethurst; Burnley, D. Irving and A. Brooks; Carlisle, W. Fisher; Chorley, T. Jefferson; Clitheroe, T. Rothstein; Coventry, C. J. Kebbell; Dewsbury, A. C. Burn; Lincoln, L. Williams; Lynn, G. Hewitt;

Nelson, H. Quelch; Northampton, J. Gribble; Norwich, W. G. Hildersley; Oxford, L. Cotton; Reading, E. B. Savage; Southampton, T. Lewis; Southend-on-Sea, W. S. Broadbank; Tunbridge Wells, J. Milstead; Wigan, P. Walsh.

Scotland:—Aberdeen, J. G. Webster; Edinburgh (Eastern), G. Gunn; Falkirk, J. C. Matheson; Govan, H. Burrows; Kirkcaldy, H. Barnes; Leith, G. S. Yates.

The following are the branches whose delegates were not allowed to take part in the Conference, together with the names of the delegates, and the reasons for rejecting them:—

Glasgow (Tradeston), G. Durward, and South St. Pancras, F. Gublass. These branches had been formed less than three months, and had, consequently, paid no dues. Edinburgh, W. Walker; Glasgow, H. L. McLean; North Camberwell, J. R. Lockwood—these branches were more than three months behind with the dues of the last year. The delegates from Brixton and Burnley were allowed to sit, notwithstanding arrears of dues, on the ground that in both cases the debt was an old one, which was being gradually cleared.

Armley, Great Harwood, Ilkeston, and Rawtenstall wrote asking the Conference to appoint delegates to act for them, and sending instructions as to how such delegates were to vote; but the Conference declined either to appoint delegates or to accept these instructions as proxies, on the ground that all branches had had ample opportunity to communicate with London members who would have been willing to represent them.

Some members of the late Finsbury Park branch attended and claimed a right to sit as delegates. This was refused, and they were only permitted to be present while the expulsion of P. Friedberg and the dissolution of their branch were under discussion.

J. F. Green had been appointed provisional chairman by the E.C., and delivered the inaugural address, after which he was elected Chairman of the Conference. Councillor T. Lewis, of Southampton, was elected vice-chairman. E. E. Hunter, F. Webster, and E. Raven were appointed Credentials and Standing Orders Committee, and H. Neumann and H. Barnes were appointed tellers.

Friday, April 10th.

In the course of his opening remarks the Chairman said that it was his duty in the name of the Executive Council to welcome all the delegates to the Congress and in the name of the London branches to welcome their provincial comrades. He hoped the Conference would be a success and strengthen the cause. There had, perhaps, never been a Conference which came at a more appropriate time than the present. We had a Government in power of a most reactionary character, absolutely discredited, even many of its own nominal supporters not looking kindly upon it. It would have been ousted long since, but the Opposition was as discredited as the Government and divided in its own ranks. This decay of the Liberal Party showed that the country was seeking for a new party of progress, and gave us the opportunity to go forward to take its place. But unfortunately we were not ready. We had not the means, and we had not the members, to step into the shoes of the old moribund Liberal Party. The proletariat of this country, unlike that of some others, was not ripe for the adoption of the principles of Social-Democracy. They were still inclined to be led away by the old will-o'-the-wisps of Radicalism or by Liberal-Labourism. Many of them had noticed how Kautsky in some articles of his that had appeared in *Justice* had called attention to the remarkable fact that the largest amount of class-consciousness among the proletariat was to be found in that country of the civilised world where there was the least amount of political freedom, namely Russia, and the smallest amount of class-consciousness was to be found in England, where political freedom was most developed. Perhaps it was precisely because in England we had the suffrage widely extended, and had freedom of speech and of the press, that the eyes of the workers were closed to the need for their economic emanicipation. Whatever the cause, it was a sad thing for the British Social-Democrat to have to admit that almost everywhere in the world was to be found a healthier and stronger movement existing than in his own country. In these circumstances what were we to do? We had to go on preaching our principles as hitherto until they were accepted. Speaking further of the movement on the Continent, he said that the arrest of the Russian Socialist, Gotz, by a professedly progressive

Government like that of Italy, was an abominable thing. Those who knew Gotz's career knew how absurd was the charge brought against him of complicity in the assassination of Sipyaguin, the late Russian Minister of the Interior. At all hazards, the infamy of his being handed over to the Russian Government must be prevented, and there was good hope, owing to the action of Enrico Ferri, who had undertaken Gotz's defence, and had brought the matter before the Italian Chamber of Deputies, and owing to the action being taken by other Socialists in Italy, that extradition would be prevented. Reverting to the movement here, he appealed to those present to be united. It was but reading the lessons of history aright to recognise that no great movement had ever been ultimately triumphant, unless those taking part in it had closed up their ranks and gone forward with a united purpose. He did not want a nominal unity before the movement was ready for it, but he wanted them to do nothing to prevent the ultimate unity of the Socialist Party of this country. This unity must be obtained without our giving up any part of our ideal. However valuable our palliatives might be to make things a little less miserable for the people, we must not lose sight of the social revolution. On, he would say, to the last great struggle. The class struggles of the past had left one class in bondage—the workers. When they were emancipated the last great struggle would be fought and won, and the world would enter on an era when hatred and violence would be banished from earth, and love—"the manly love of comrades"—would be the rule of each and all.

The Chairman and other officers of the Conference were then elected, as stated above, and the Secretary read several letters, among which was one from the Parti Socialist Français, stating that their Congress would be held at Bordeaux on Sunday, Monday, and Tuesday. It was resolved that our fraternal greetings be sent them. A proposition was made that a resolution be sent expressing sympathy with the railway workers and others on strike in Holland. It was resolved that the Standing Orders Committee draft a suitable resolution, but at a later stage of its proceedings the Conference, having heard a statement from comrade Van der Veer, and having telegraphed the Social-Democrats of Holland and received a reply, decided that no such resolution be sent, as it would be putting a weapon into

the hands of the Dutch Anarchists to be used against the Social-Democrats there.

W. G. Simons (Stratford) then moved :—

That this Conference, meeting in London, desires to express its unanimous pleasure at the restoration to health of that revered champion of the cause of the people, H. M. Hyndman, and trusts that Nature may long preserve him to continue the fight for Social-Democracy which he has, with his comrades, so unselfishly made in the interests of the democracy.

D. Irving (Burnley) and H. Burrows (Govan) spoke to this resolution, the latter saying that after 22 years' struggle for Social-Democracy, it was but bare justice to recognise what Hyndman had done. This was not a vote of thanks, for he was sure that Hyndman himself would deprecate anything of that sort; but the present moment was an opportune one for expressing our sense of the great services Hyndman had rendered to the cause. He wished that with the name of Hyndman had been associated that of his faithful and devoted wife.

A. C. Burn and W. G. Simons spoke briefly to the resolution, which was then put and carried amid applause.

Formal business connected with the consideration of Standing Orders, and the receiving of the report of the Standing Orders Committee, occupied the rest of the morning's sitting.

In the afternoon the Conference proceeded to consider the appeal of P. Friedberg against his expulsion by the E.C. Not being able to be present, he had sent a letter, which the secretary read. By this letter Friedberg defended his conduct in writing to the New York *People* the letter which had occasioned his expulsion. He alleged that he had therein stated nothing which was untrue, and as the matters it dealt with had been previously discussed at a Conference of the S.D.F.—open to the press and public—the question whether such matters were of a nature that made it undesirable for them to be published did not arise. He repeated his charges against Quelch and the E.C., viz., that Quelch, as delegate from the E.C. at the 1902 Conference, had opposed, and assisted to defeat, a motion that if any member or branch was accused before the E.C., that member or branch should be allowed a copy of the accusation; that Quelch suppressed

the Manifesto of the Irish Socialist Republican Party against the Home Rulers, and denied having seen it, although several copies had been sent him, and it had appeared in *Vorwaerts*, *Le Petit Sou* and the New York *People*; that Quelch, as delegate of the E C. at the 1902 Conference, had denied all knowledge of the letter which Lansbury had written resigning his candidature at Bow and Bromley, because he "no longer believed in fighting independently," and this although he (Quelch) had been present at the meeting of the E.C. on the evening when this letter was read; that the E.C. had sent round to the branches a bogus letter, purporting to be the one in which Lansbury resigned his candidature. Among other matters the letter stated that Friedberg had not written to the *People* until he had been denied admission to the columns of *Justice*.

E. E. Hunter (Bethnal Green), in a speech reiterating and enlarging on the points raised in the letter, moved that Friedberg be reinstated. He said that it was not men like Friedberg that we had to fear. The enemies of the movement were those members of the S.D.F. who would support a labour fraud like Crooks.

L. Cotton seconded, stating the charges brought by Friedberg in the *People* were true. It seemed to him that Friedberg had been expelled because he was a prominent man representing that portion of the Social-Democracy who were in favour of fighting on straightforward revolutionary lines. If the E.C. was to expel a man like Friedberg for an honest criticism, what about a man like Lansbury, who told us to ally ourselves with the capitalist Liberal Party? And what about the men who supported a labour candidate in the face of a resolution of the E.C. forbidding them to do so? Yet when the Edinburgh branch expelled a man who had done this, the E.C. had jumped upon it. If the policy Friedberg had laid down was an impossible one, we had better get rid of the theory that we were based on the class war. Better get rid of the class war theory than retain it as a phrase to mouth out now that it had ceased to be a principle to guide us.

J. Hunter Watts (Executive Council) said that Friedberg had been expelled for the part he had taken in a campaign of malign and slanderous misrepresentation carried on against the E.C. Personally the E.C. might be indifferent, but when

it was said that the men whom the S.D.F. elected to carry on its business for twelve months were trimmers, time-servers, or liars, it was the S.D.F. which was attacked. As to Friedberg's complaint that Quelch would not allow his letter to appear in *Justice*, that paper did not exist in order that the S.D.F. might be insulted and assailed. The *People*, to which he sent the letter, was a paper which for months before had been slandering and abusing the S.D.F. Watts read this letter to the Conference, and said that it was because of that, and not on any question of revolutionary tactics *v.* revisionism that Friedberg had been expelled. He defended Quelch from the charges brought against him.

H. Quelch said that the letter the Secretary had read was mainly an attack upon him. With regard to the so-called suppression of information, at the Blackburn Conference the preceding year a proposal was brought forward that if any accusation was made against any branch or member, the persons accused should be placed in possession of that accusation by the E.C. To lay that down as an absolute rule would be a most dangerous course to adopt. Much of the business of the organisation must necessarily be private, and no self-respecting man would consent to act on an E.C. that was not allowed to judge whether information placed in its hands should be kept private or made public. Of the Irish manifesto, he said it was published when he was fighting the election at Dewsbury; and what Friedberg and his supporters suggested was that he (Quelch) had suppressed it because it was an attack upon the Irish Party and would injure his chances. The theory of these people was that you should find out something that would injure you and do that; that you should make as many enemies as possible. But, in fact, he did not see the manifesto and knew nothing about it until he received a letter of remonstrance; while as for seeing it in the *People* or other papers, tons of papers came into the office that he never saw at all. They were simply packed up and sent off to the comrades who made the extracts for *Justice*, or swept away without being looked at. He could not read all the papers that came if there were 36 hours in the day. When his attention was called to the manifesto he inserted it. As Hunter Watts had said, he (Quelch) had not seen Lansbury's letter at the time of the Blackburn Conference. If such a letter had been, to his knowledge, received he would

not have denied the fact, but he would have refused to divulge its contents. Friedberg said that Lansbury would not send two letters resigning his candidature, but such things were not infrequently done. If a man wrote and gave you information of a private character he might also send another letter conveying the same information, but not in so damaging a form, and say, "This is the thing I would suggest you should publish." It was difficult to put your finger upon any particular statement in Friedberg's letter to the *People* and say it was not true; but it contained half-lies, suppressions of the truth, suggestions of the false, and told the truth in such a way as to make it more misleading than any lie could possibly be. The "impossibilists" complained that the E.C. had not expelled Lansbury. We would be all very sorry to lose Lansbury. But the principle of these people was that if you had a man that was likely to carry the Red Flag forward to victory you should get rid of him. In the midst of the Dewsbury election they had sent a resolution to the E.C. asking that he (Quelch) should be withdrawn because A. E. Fletcher wrote a letter in *Reynolds's* approving the candidature, and their talk about Crooks meant that they desired the expulsion of Thorne and Macdonald.

The discussion was continued at great length. Eventually the reinstatement was refused by 55 to 9.

The appeal of the Finsbury Park Branch against their dissolution by the Executive Council was next heard. This again produced a warm discussion, but was also rejected by a large majority—40 to 11.

SATURDAY, APRIL 11TH.

The expulsion of G. S. Yates, moved by the Executive Council, and other matters arising out of his method of conducting the *Socialist*, took up the whole day. The proceedings were heated throughout.

J. Hunter Watts (Executive Council) moved "That G. S. Yates be expelled the S.D.F." He said it was the first time in the twenty years that he had been in the movement that he had felt it to be his duty to move the expulsion of a member. He hoped the delegates would not be misled into regarding the question as one between revisionists and revolutionists. He had heard for two years past that Yates was

exercising a pernicious influence; and, though at first he had paid no attention to these stories, two visits that he had made to Glasgow had convinced him. The first of these visits was made about eighteen months ago, when he was invited by a joint committee representing the S.D.F., the I.L.P. and the Clarion Scouts to lecture at Albion Halls. He had on that occasion visited the Glasgow (Central) Branch—a branch under the tutelage of Yates—and was informed that the S.D.F. had nothing to do with the Clarion Scouts, who were a body of compromisers and trimmers. More recently the disintegrating influence this branch was having on the movement there was shown by their conduct towards a Mr. J. H. Thomson, whom they had accepted as a member. Thomson was well known to be a member of the I.L.P.—so well known that they could not have been been ignorant of the fact. They accepted him, and, in February, wrote inviting him to speak from their platform at the Commune celebration. Before he could reply, a letter followed stating that they had discovered he was going to speak in the course of the ensuing summer at Albion Halls for the Clarion Scouts, and under these circumstances they would not on any account stand on the same platform with him. Afterwards they wrote informing him he could not be a member both of the S.D.F. and I.L.P. To be consistent they could not stand on the same platform with Hyndman, Burrows, or any of the half-dozen who had availed themselves of the opportunity of carrying on the propaganda in Glasgow which the meetings at the Albion Halls gave them, which propaganda was neglected by the Glasgow (Central) Branch of the S.D.F. Since then a considerable number of men who had been long members of the S.D.F. had withdrawn from the Glasgow (Central) Branch, finding it impossible to work with the other members. We had had the same experience a year or two before in Edinburgh. A few weeks ago he had gone down to Glasgow again to make a close scrutiny into the circumstances connected with this withdrawal. While there he had purchased a copy of the *Socialist* which contained an article in which the E.C. were characterised as liars. That article was only a fresh chapter in a long course of abuse that had been levelled against most of the men who had done active work in the movement in the past. He proceeded to quote from a letter written to the New York *People*.

This occasioned an interruption from E. E. Hunter, who said there was no proof as to who had sent the letter, and there was for a time considerable disorder. Resuming, J. Hunter Watts proceeded to read from the letter, which stated that its author and those who sympathised with him intended to start an agency of the New York Labour News Co. so as to flood the S.D.F. with S.L.P. literature, with the object of "counteracting the malificent influence of the vipers of the Centre." Anyone who visited the Glasgow Branch would find that this agency had been started. Much of this literature was of a very violent kind. The object to be served was pointed out in the "impossibilists'" organ when they wished they had the S.L.P. hammer on this side of the water to stave in the heads of "the Hyndmans, the Hardies, and other misleaders." If these men really believed we were "misleaders" and "vipers" they would want to leave us; but their intention was plainly to remain until they had worked everywhere the same mischief as they had done in Glasgow, where, after twenty years' work we had but a handful of men who either could not or would not pay their dues. It was very slowly, and after much deliberation, that he had arrived at the conclusion that G. S. Yates was exercising a noxious influence in the S.D.F., that he was sowing dissensions, creating schism, and was not actuated by that purity of motive which he affected.

The motion for expulsion was seconded by G. Gunn (East Edinburgh).

The discussion was a very lengthy one. In its course a good deal of feeling was displayed on both sides, and there were one or two somewhat violent scenes. The main contentions were as follows: On the one hand it was alleged that the faction led by Yates had openly quarrelled in public with men who were good Socialists, but who were not members of the S.D.F., and had violently attacked men who had a deserved reputation for good work done for labour in the trade union movement; that they practically refused to sell *Justice* or the literature of the T.C.P., supplying instead the *Socialist*, the *People*, and the literature published by the New York Labour News Co.; that they had expelled from the branches they controlled men who had worked for years in the movement; that they had disrupted the Edinburgh and Glasgow branches; that these branches paid no dues to the Centre; that

they carried on in the columns of the *Socialist* and the *People* a campaign of vilification against the E.C. and against others who had obtained by years of work for the cause a position of well-deserved prominence in the movement; that the general result of their tactics had been to paralyse, if not to kill, the movement in Scotland, and to damage it elsewhere; that the mischief was spreading, was, indeed, eating like a canker worm into the very heart of the movement; and that all this was not, and could not be, the work of men actuated by a sincere desire to modify the tactics of the S.D.F., but was obviously part of a concerted plan to destroy it, a plan conceived, and endeavoured to be carried out, by someone who was cunning enough to understand that if the S.D.F. was to be destroyed, it must be from within.

On the other hand it was contended that, so far as the quarrel with the E.C. and others was concerned, there were vilifications on both sides; that the articles in the *Socialist*, though perhaps in bad taste, contained nothing that was not true, and that there was no proof that Yates had ever written to the *People*; that the movement in Scotland was in a stronger and more virile condition than it had been for years past; that the people they had expelled, or who had gone off of their own accord to form new branches, were people who did nothing but idle about the club-rooms and play cards; and that if the Glasgow and Edinburgh branches paid no dues it was because they had been impoverished by the loss of a good many members, most of whom were in arrears.

Finally, G. S. Yates was called upon to speak. He said that he had no thundering desire or howling ambition to remain a member of the S.D.F. If he was allowed to remain he should go on as previously, because he believed his lines were the right ones, and if he was put out of the S.D.F. his opinions would remain unchanged. Hunter Watts had said it was not a question of revisionists *v.* revolutionists, but what was the question? Was it about himself? It was not. Nor was it a question of attacks upon Quelch. There was no animus against Quelch, but he happened to edit the paper. It was fundamentally a question of where the S.D.F. stood, not of personalities on either side. *Justice* was supposed to voice the opinions of the party—and he believed it did so as a rule—and it was within the right of any member of the party to endeavour to change the policy of the

paper if he believed it was not being conducted on right lines. He and those who agreed with him had endeavoured to do this, and in his opinion they had succeeded. It was not because of lack of success that they had been brought there, but because they had been too successful in showing up the absurdities of the S.D.F. Three years ago it was his misfortune to go to Glasgow to work. At that time there were absolutely no meetings at all being held in that town—the second largest in Britain. Nor had there been for eighteen months. Upon that occasion he had been welcomed to Glasgow with the widest possible arms.

This remark led to some interruption, after which G. S. Yates resumed that these men now appeared to find in him an entirely different person to what they had found him then, and that everything that he had done and said they had tabulated and registered and sent to Bolt Court to be preserved. When he went to Glasgow there were only five or six members of the branch, whereas now there were 70 or 80; and, during the three years he had been there, they had held something like 400 propaganda meetings. These had been addressed by men from all parts of Scotland, who believed that Glasgow was a stronghold that had to be won, and could be won if we worked hard enough. But the Glasgow Social-Democrats found the action of Burrows, Quelch, and others, in lending support to people who would grind them to powder if they could, had a terrible effect on their branch. When the S.D.F. left the Labour Representation Committee in England, seven branches in the Scottish district left the Scottish Workers' Representation Committee. But the E.C. allowed the Aberdeen Branch to remain in it. This laxity was shown in every possible case. Then there was the trouble caused by seven men in Edinburgh who had broken—and broken deliberately—every rule that the S.D.F. had ever made to guide itself. Some of these men were members of the E.C., and the result was that the S.D.F. stank in the nostrils of honest people when they saw such men as these holding themselves up to be the high moral instructors of others. The E.C. mouthed phrases about the class war, but would never lift its hand to organise the working class solidly and systematically for the overthrow of the capitalist system.

Proceeding, he alleged that arrangements had been made in some wards in Burnley that the S.D.F. would bring forward

no candidate on condition of no Liberal candidate being brought forward in the ward where Dan Irving was running. Dan Irving at once rose and denied this, and a violent scene ensued. When order was restored, G. S. Yates proceeded with his speech, but some allegations he made about replies given by G. Hewitt and H. Burrows to a question asked them at the Albion Halls led to another violent scene, after which the Conference declined to hear him further. The motion for his expulsion was put to the vote and carried by 52 to 7.

J. Ellison (Tottenham) then proposed that the E.C. should be empowered to deal with those members who had openly sided with and supported G. S. Yates. There was some discussion as to what form the resolution should take. Eventually it was put to the meeting as follows:—

"That the new Executive be instructed to expel, without right of appeal, any member or branch adopting the conduct or tactics for which G. S. Yates has been expelled." This was carried by 56 to 6.

The following resolution was then moved by the Executive Council: "That this Conference strongly condemns the whole tone and conduct of the *Socialist*, and calls upon those branches responsible for its appearance either to immediately alter its tone or cease its publication." Carried by 44 to 6.

SUNDAY, APRIL 12TH.

The first business was a report from the Financial Secretary as to the financial position of the branches to the Central Office. It appeared that the London branches owed at the rate of 1s. 4d. per head and the provincial and Scotch branches at the rate of about 3s. 4d. The report was adopted after some discussion with a recommendation that the loyalty manifested by the branches to the Centre should be more than maintained in the coming year.

The Financial Statement, showing the receipts and expenditure for the past year and the general financial position of the S.D.F., was then put to the meeting and adopted.

The following report from the Executive Council was then taken as read:—

TO THE MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION.—

COMRADES,—Since the last Annual Conference we have held 26 ordinary and 3 special meetings. The attendances at these meetings have been as follows:—C. F. Davis 16, and once excused on

S.D.F. business; Mary Gray (ill), 14; Clara Hendin, 25; George Hewitt, 26; A. E. Holmes, 2 (resigned); J. Jones, 18; J. Kent, 8 (resigned); F. Porter 21; H. Quelch, 25; T. Rothstein, 22; A. A. Watts, 23; J. Hunter Watts, 22; J. F. Green (subsequently elected), 15; G. Pegg (subsequently elected), 13; L. Cotton (Oxford), 3; F. Lister (Dewsbury), 1; Dan Irving (Burnley), 2. At the special meetings the attendances have been:—C. F. Davis, 1; Mary Gray, 2; Clara Hendin, 3; G. Hewitt, 3; J. Jones, 2; F. Porter 2; H. Quelch, 1; T. Rothstein, 2; A. A. Watts, 3; J. Hunter Watts, 1; J. F. Green, 2; and G. Pegg, 2.

We have devoted considerable time and labour, in conjunction with the Organisation Committee, in preparing a draft of the rules revised in accordance with the instructions which you gave to your delegates at the last Annual Conference. This revision unfortunately does not seem to have satisfied the general body of members as we had hoped that it would, for we find the number of further amendments proposed to the revised version of the rules to be greater than ever. These amendments it will be your duty to deal with at the present Annual Conference, and we trust that some way will be found by which this annual casting of the rules into the melting pot may be avoided, so that a certain amount of stability and continuance may be preserved to the programme, policy and rules of our organisation. In accordance with the instructions of the last Annual Conference we have declined to accept any amendments to the rules and any items for the agenda of the present Conference from branches more than three months in arrears with their payments to the Central Office.

We regret to say that, since the last Annual Conference, we have had to deal with a manifestation of the spirit of "impossibilism," of which the delegates at Blackburn had some experience a twelvemonth ago. We refer, of course, to the matters which culminated in the expulsion of P. Friedberg and the dissolution of the Finsbury Park branch. Your branches have received both from the late Finsbury Park branch and from ourselves a statement setting forth the position as it is regarded from either side, and appeals will be laid before this Conference against our decisions. It is, therefore, not necessary for us to refer to these incidents at any great length, for we feel sure that the Conference will agree with those branches which expressed their views on the matter when asked by us to do so in the proportion of 32 to 5 in favour of our action. It is in the power of the organisation to alter its policy whenever a majority of members think fit to do so. The discussion of that policy can be carried on in a friendly and fraternal manner by those who genuinely hold differences of opinion as to what should be our tactics in the field of politics. We may honestly believe that the tactics which have become known as "impossibilist" are calculated to lessen our influence in every direction, to diminish the number of our members, and to reduce us to

a state of political impotence; whilst on the other hand there are those who may honestly hold that the adoption of "impossibilist" tactics is the only safeguard for the political purity of the S.D.F. These divergences of views, we say, can be threshed out in a perfectly comrade-like manner. What we have set our faces against is the association with belief in "impossibilist" tactics of sneers, jibes, insinuations and malevolent aspersions, which, though they undoubtedly recoil upon those who make use of them, nevertheless injure our organisation and cause many to slacken their work for the movement in disgust at what they see going on. Another case in point is that of a recent article on the policy of the S.D.F. in the *Socialist* by George S. Yates, and we have brought the matter before you in order that you may deal with his conduct, and also with the tone of the *Socialist* itself, which, as at present conducted, is, we do not hesitate to say, injurious to the S.D.F.

Unfortunately the financial position of the S.D.F. has been very critical during the past twelve months, and is still so to-day. The balance-sheet will show that we have been compelled to draw upon the Central Election Fund to an ever-increasing extent in order to meet those current expenses without which the organisation could not be kept going. We cannot complain of the responses to appeals for special objects. The contributions for the Dewsbury contest and the Gibraltar Lock-out show that these are always forthcoming when the occasion for them arises. It is the regular income of the S.D.F. from its own sources as an organisation which is altogether insufficient to meet its current needs. Last autumn we endeavoured to guage the opinion of the members on the question which has been considered at the last few Conferences—that of raising the contributions from members to branches from 1d. to 2d. per week, at the same time abolishing the subsidiary funds now in existence. We regret to say that the votes recorded, although a slight majority were in favour of the increased contribution, were so few that they did not warrant us making or recommending the change suggested. About a month or six weeks ago, we issued an appeal to the members for financial assistance, from which good results, we learn, are likely to be obtained. We must, of course, bear in mind that the last few years have been ones of struggle for any organisation professing any degree of advanced opinions. It is, therefore, no wonder that the S.D.F. has suffered from the reaction which has recently been so prevalent among the people of these islands.

Paucity of funds has prevented the carrying out of some of the instructions given us by the last Annual Conference, notably that of the appointment of an organiser. In accordance with the wishes of the Conference, we advertised for applicants, and received some answers, many of the writers of which would, we believe, have excellently fulfilled the duties required of them. But as those

most suitable for the position would have had to give up their employment, we felt that the financial obligation was too great for us to undertake with any degree of confidence. Failing the appointment of an organiser, we have subsidised the work of comrades locally, such as Lister at Dewsbury and adjacent towns, W. Gee at Northampton, and G. Hewitt in South Wales, and have been assisted by D. Irving in places near Burnley and C. J. Scott at Wellingborough, Rushden and Olney; whilst our secretary paid special visits to Southend, Northampton and Southampton, with good results to the local branches.

Our Parliamentary activities have been considerable since the last Conference, though there has not been much publicity given to them. With regard to South-West Ham we are glad to say that the possibility of a Socialist opponent has been avoided, and that Thorne now remains the Socialist and Trade Unionist candidate. At Burnley the prospects for the return of H. M. Hyndman grow brighter every day; whilst our Dewsbury comrades have considerably strengthened their hold on the division by their local electoral work, the increase of their membership, and the opening of new branches, and the candidature of H. Quelch is now regarded generally by local trade unionists far more favourably than at the last bye-election. At Northampton the municipal successes of the S.D.F. last November have given heart and encouragement to our local comrades, and have brought them a considerable increase of membership. The votes they have polled show that they have a considerable hold on the constituency, and there is no doubt that George Hewitt will poll an excellent vote at the next general election. Owing to differences our Blackburn comrades have regretfully felt called upon to withdraw their support from Philip Snowden's candidature; at Rochdale the S.D.F. is supporting the candidature of S. G. Hobson jointly with the I.L.P.; the Leith Branch propose to put forward G. S. Yates as parliamentary candidate for Leith Burghs; and A. E. Holmes has been adopted as the Socialist and Trade Unionist candidate for Walthamstow. We regret to report that George Lansbury has withdrawn from his candidature in Bow and Bromley. We have had several applications to put forward parliamentary candidates in various constituencies, but the lack of men and money has forced us to restrict our efforts to those parliamentary candidatures which we feel able to promote in a manner which will be satisfactory unto the S.D.F.

The lock-out of the coal porters at Gibraltar which took place last April, owing to the men refusing to accept the terms of the Gibraltar Employers' Federation, was complicated by the partiality shown by the Governor, Sir George White, towards the masters. We were supplied with full particulars by our comrades at Gibraltar, and we did our best to get the facts made known to the public. We did our utmost to bring pressure to bear upon the

Government, and appealed for support to the trade unionists of the country, who responded well to the appeal. The Colonial Office was inundated with protests against Sir George White's conduct from all parts of the country, and had those protests been followed up by action on the part of even half a dozen members of the House of Commons, something might have been done to put a stop to the active and passive assistance rendered by the military and naval authorities to the Employers' Federation. The lock-out ended disastrously for the men, for they were literally starved into submission to the employers' terms. Since then another attempt has been made to start a labour organ in Gibraltar, but Sir George White still refuses to grant the necessary licence to our comrade Andrew Fernandez for that purpose. This latest piece of tyranny on the part of the Governor of Gibraltar has been brought under the notice of several members of the House of Commons, but little appears to have been done by them except the writing of a few letters to the Colonial Office.

We have to report that at the meeting of the International Bureau at Brussels held at the end of last December, it was decided to postpone the holding of the International Socialist Congress at Amsterdam until 1904.

Shortly after the holding of the Trades Union Congress last September in London we held a large meeting in the Memorial Hall on the subject of "Trade Unionism and Socialism," with special reference to the Congress. We have also instituted a series of monthly gatherings of members of the S.D.F. who are trade union officials in London, at which various subjects affecting the relations of Socialism to trade unionism are discussed, and which are attended by as many of us as can do so. We are convinced that these gatherings are exceedingly useful, for they enable us to understand and appreciate the difficulties against which Socialist trade union officials have to contend in the political movement which the Taff Vale and other legal decisions have compelled the trade unions to make.

In conjunction with the London Central Council of the S.D.F., we carried on an agitation among the unemployed during the winter months. A difficulty was felt in how to make the unemployed show themselves to the public. The difficulty was solved to some extent by the organisation of daily parades during which collections were made, the collections being afterwards shared among those who marched in the processions. The making of collections was not a method which any of us particularly cared to adopt; still, while the parades and collections were under our direct control, they certainly impressed the public with the fact that a great and growing number of people were out of employment. Experience, however, has taught us that this method of parading the unemployed can only be carried on for a few weeks. Small groups of men, whose cupidity may have been excited at the

prospect of a greater share in the collections if they broke off from the main processions, soon reduced the business to a farce. The agitation was concluded by a mass meeting in Trafalgar Square. The agitation, whilst it lasted, undoubtedly assisted the unemployed in many districts in obtaining work from the local authorities, whilst it caused many committees to spring into existence for the theoretical discussion of the unemployed problem and for the practical alleviation of the distress. The S.D.F. were represented on the National Unemployed Committee which held its conference at the Guildhall on February 27 and 28.

In regard to the issuing of leaflets, two manifestoes have been published by us since the last Annual Conference. They were the Coronation Manifesto and the one on the Education Bill. For both these there was a considerable demand, but want of funds prevented our printing as many as could have been distributed. We had also in preparation a manifesto for the miners of Great Britain on the American Coal War, pointing out to them that their monetary sympathy for their American fellow miners would be of little use so long as they were producing coal for export to the United States. The acceptance of arbitration by the American miners rendered the publication of the manifesto unnecessary. We have also taken part with the I.L.P., Clarion Fellowship, and the Fabian Society in a conference to consider the best means of promoting the sale of Socialist literature, a circular about which is being sent out to the branches and groups of the four organisations.

Committees have been appointed to deal with the matter of the Scottish inquiry and with the work of the Central Office.

Death, we are sorry to say, has been exceedingly rife of late in our ranks, and among those whose recent loss we have to deplore are our late comrades Tom Jarvis and Charles Martin. As the funerals took place near the metropolis, we were able to be represented at them.

We are happy to be able to state that H. M. Hyndman is now almost restored to his usual health and vigour. As a welcome to him on his return to political activity and general work in the Socialist movement, we arranged a great public meeting in Queen's Hall on March 25, and we are glad to say that the remarkable feature of the meeting was the great number of strangers who were present.

There has been a larger number of new branches formed during the past twelve months than has been the case for the last few years. They are: Islington, South Norwood, South St. Pancras, Willesden, and Tooting in London; and Leeds (Central), Rushden and Higham Ferrars, Bournemouth, Batley, Barrow-in-Furness, Ravensthorpe, Manchester (New Cross), Abercynon (re-formed), Todmorden (re-formed), Bacup, Tradeston (Glasgow), and Earby.

The most encouraging item of the year's work is the result of the last municipal elections. We gained seats at Burnley, Northampton, Southampton, Southend, and West Ham, whilst other comrades nearly succeeded in getting returned. The votes polled by many of our candidates will undoubtedly make the running for further victories next November. At bye-elections, too, we have made fresh gains, notably at Burnley and West Ham in the Guardians elections; and at Edmonton for the recent District Council elections.

The outlook for the Socialist movement in this country is, we are sure, brighter than it has been for some years. It is for us Socialists to see that we take advantage of these more favourable circumstances. The members of the S.D.F. must settle the policy which the organisation is to pursue, and we feel that that policy must be, as heretofore, one of independence, though not necessarily of isolation.

In the discussion which followed some objection was taken to the paragraph speaking of Yates's candidature. It was decided to add the words: "Since this report was issued G. S. Yates has been expelled the S.D.F."

The delegate from the East London branch and some others objected to the tone of the Coronation Manifesto, and others objected to some of the people invited to be on the platform on the occasion of the meeting in the Queen's Hall. The conduct of the E.C. in declining to allow the formation of a branch of the S.D.F. in Hammersmith was also the occasion of some adverse criticism, but on the explanation that there were reasons why the question were held over till after the Conference, it was left to the E.C. to reconsider the question. The report as amended was adopted.

The election of General Secretary was next proceeded with.

J. HUNTER WATTS, on behalf of the Executive Council, moved a resolution complaining of lack of attention to duties on the part of the General Secretary.

Some discussion followed, and the SECRETARY made a statement, explaining that the arrears of work were partly due to a temporary disablement and partly to the fact that lack of funds had prevented him having the same amount of clerical assistance last year as he had had for two for three years previous. He suggested that the resolution should be modified into the following:—

That this Annual Conference recognises that the work of the

Central Office has not always been carried on in a manner satisfactory to the organisation. It therefore instructs the new Executive Council to lay down such regulations as may be agreed upon between themselves and the General Secretary for the purpose of securing promptitude in the dispatch of Central Office business; and resolves that such regulations shall be binding on the General Secretary.

This was adopted, and afterwards a resolution expressing sympathy with the Secretary on account of the accident he had met with was passed, as also an instruction to the E.C. that the arrears of the Secretary's wages be a first charge on the profits of the Bazaar.

The proposed amendments to the Programme, Electoral Policy, and Rules were next considered, which were finally adopted in the form appended to this report, subject to some verbal alterations since made.

This business being ended, the Conference proceeded to the election of the Executive Council.

H. BURROWS spoke at some length as to the absurdity of electing people to the E.C. whom we should afterwards expel, and a very heated discussion followed.

The following were finally elected:—

London: Bloch, Olaf (Brixton), Davis, C. F. (Kentish Town), Green, J. F. (Central), Hewitt, George (Shoreditch), Hendin, Clara (Kensal Town), Montefiore, Dora B. (Central), Pegg, G. (Tottenham), Quelch, H. (Bermondsey), Rothstein, T. (Kingsland), Watts, A. A. (Mile End), Watts, J. Hunter (Peckham), Woodroffe, W. A. (Peckham).

Provincial: Armour, J. F. (Glasgow Central), Atkinson, W. (Darwen), Eccles, Fleming (Blackburn), Irving, Dan (Burnley), Kidd, J. J. (Lynn), Leggo, J. H. (Plymouth), Leslie, J. (East Edinburgh), Lewis, T. (Southampton), Lister, F. (Dewsbury), Muse, T. (Carlisle), Simmonds, W. J. (Birmingham), Taylor, P. H. (Accrington).

In view of the lateness of the hour the Conference proceeded to deal in a summary manner with most of the business remaining. A proposition that one-third of the total amount paid to Propaganda Fund should be expended in the employment of organisers in Scotland was referred to the E.C. Another that *Justice* be taken over by the party was briefly discussed. It was pointed out that practically the S.D.F. Executive was already in control, and the motion on

being put to the vote was lost. A number of other motions dealing with the better organisation of the movement, the training of speakers, the promotion of Socialist unity, and our relations with the I.L.P. were either withdrawn or passed over on motion that next business be proceeded with. The following resolutions were, however, discussed and finally carried in their present form:—

Moved by the E.C.: That this Conference, while re-affirming the general S.D.F. attitude towards independent political action of the working class as the necessary counterpart of its trade union action, forming the only true means of its economic and social emancipation, warns the organised workers against the mistaken principles on which the movement for independent Labour representation is now being made to proceed. By merely binding the candidates to a formal sort of independence of action during elections and in Parliament, without basing that independence upon the clear recognition of the existing antagonisms between the classes and consequently, without deriving it from a general Labour, political and social programme not only independent of, but in its essentials antagonistic to, the programmes of the two parties, the present policy guiding the Labour Representation movement is merely calculated to deceive the expectations of the working-class by imposing upon it, under the vague name of Labour men, persons in no way voicing its legitimate aspirations. The Conference accordingly expresses its conviction that the Independent Labour Representation movement, in order to be effective and to deserve its name, must proceed on strictly defined class lines, and have for its ultimate object the conquest of political power by the working class, and the overthrow of the present capitalist order of society by the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange.

Moved by E.C.: This Conference condemns the Education policy of the Government, as exemplified in the new Education Act and the educational measure for London, as these neither establish a directly and democratically elected authority for all education, secondary and technical as well as elementary, nor provide for the free maintenance of scholars, nor for all education to be secular and free.

Moved by Peckham and Dulwich branch: This Conference sends fraternal greetings to the German Social-Democratic Party, and sincerely trusts thatthe forthcoming General Election will result in a great triumph for Social-Democracy.

Moved by East London Jewish branch: Whereas the Anti-alien agitation is calculated to mislead the working-class on the true remedies for the evils which are falsely attributed to alien immigration; recognising that the Anti-alien agitation, by sowing

discord between workers of various races, weakens their force as a class, preventing them from presenting a united front against their enemies; recognising that the Anti-alien agitation is a veiled attack upon the right of asylum which has contributed in no small degree to the economic and social progress of England; and recognising that, as one of the greatest emigrating countries, England has no right to close her doors: This Conference condemns the Anti-alien agitation, and resolves to offer a determined and uncompromising opposition to restrictive legislation against alien immigration should such be proposed.

It was decided to hold the next Conference at Dewsbury.

T. Lewis then delivered an address on "Municipalism." He said that there were three sections of the S.D.F.; those who totally opposed municipal action; those who thought it was everything; and those who, like himself, thought we should adopt municipal action as a part, but only a part, of our policy. A lot of useful work was to be done on local authorities, but we should never lose sight of our ideal. In such matters as tramways, water supply, etc., municipalities served the public better, and also treated their employees better than a company would do. He advocated that when municipalities took up the housing problem, we should endeavour to get them to provide good homes for the people, even if this did not pay. If people lived under decent conditions, they would more readily appreciate the Socialist Ideal than they could while living under the brutalising conditions of to-day. He went on to explain and illustrate from his own experience at Southampton, some of the ways in which a Socialist on a Town Council can serve the cause.

An interesting discussion followed, after which the Chairman addressed a few remarks to the assemblage. Then singing the "Red Flag" and cheering for the Social Revolution, the Conference closed.

PROGRAMME AND RULES OF THE SOCIAL-DEMOCRATIC FEDERATION.

OBJECT.

THE Socialisation of the Means of Production, Distribution, and Exchange, to be controlled by a Democratic State in the interests of the entire community, and the complete Emancipation of Labour from the Domination of Capitalism and Landlordism, with the establishment of Social and Economic Equality between the Sexes.

The economic development of modern society is characterised by the more or less complete domination of the capitalistic mode of production over all branches of human labour.

The capitalistic mode of production, because it has the creation of profit for its sole object, therefore favours the larger capital, and is based upon the divorcement of the majority of the people from the instruments of production and the concentration of these instruments in the hands of a minority. Society is thus divided into two opposite classes: one, the capitalists and their sleeping partners, the landlords and loanmongers, holding in their hands the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and being, therefore, able to command the labour of others; the other, the working-class, the wage-earners, the proletariat, possessing nothing but their labour-power, and being consequently forced by necessity to work for the former.

The social division thus produced becomes wider and deeper with every new advance in the application of labour-saving machinery. It is most clearly recognisable, however, in the times of industrial and commercial crises, when, in consequence of the present chaotic conditions of carrying on national and international industry, production periodically comes to a standstill, and a number of the few remaining independent producers are thrown into the ranks of the proletariat. Thus, while on one hand there is incessantly going on an accumulation of capital, wealth, and power into a steadily diminishing number of hands, there is, on the other hand, a constantly growing insecurity of livelihood for the mass of wage-earners, an increasing disparity between human wants and the opportunity of acquiring the means for their satisfaction, and a steady physical and mental deterioration among the more poverty-stricken of the population.

But the more this social division widens, the stronger grows the revolt—more conscious abroad than here—of the proletariat against the capitalist system of society in which this division and all that accompanies it have originated, and find such fruitful soil. The capitalist mode of production, by massing the workers in large factories, and creating an interdependence, not only between various trades and branches of industries, but even national industries, prepares the ground and furnishes material for a universal class war. That class war may at first —as in this country—be directed against the abuses of the system, and not against the system itself; but sooner or later the workers must come to recognise that nothing short of the expropriation of the capitalist class, the ownership by the community of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, can put an end to their abject economic condition; and then the class war will become conscious instead of unconscious on the part of the working classes, and they will have for their ultimate object the overthrow of the capitalist system. At the same time, since the capitalist class holds and uses the power of the State to safeguard its position and beat off any attack, the class war must assume a political character, and become a struggle on the part of workers for the possession of the political machinery.

It is this struggle for the conquest of the political power of the State, in order to effect a social transformation, which International Social-Democracy carries on in the name and on behalf of the working class. Social-Democracy, therefore, is the only possible political party of the proletariat. The Social-Democratic Federation is a part of this International Social-Democracy. It, therefore, takes its stand on the above principles, and believes :—

1. That the emancipation of the working class can only be achieved through the socialisation of the means of production, distribution, and exchange, and their subsequent control by the organised community in the interests of the whole people.

2. That, as the proletariat is the last class to achieve freedom, its emancipation will mean the emancipation of the whole of mankind, without distinction of race, nationality, creed, or sex.

3. That this emancipation can only be the work of the working-class itself, organised nationally and internationally into a distinct political party, consciously striving after the realisation of its ideals; and, finally,

4. That, in order to ensure greater material and moral facilities for the working class to organise itself and to carry on the class war, the following reforms must immediately be carried through :—

IMMEDIATE REFORMS.

Political.

Abolition of the Monarchy.

Democratisation of the Governmental machinery, viz., Abolition of the House of Lords, Payment of Members of Legislative and Administrative bodies, Payment of Official Expenses of Elections out of the Public Funds, Adult Suffrage, Proportional Representation, Triennial Parliaments, Second Ballot, Initiative and Referendum. Foreigners to

be granted rights of citizenship after two years' residence in the country, on the recommendation of four British-born citizens, without any fees. Canvassing to be made illegal.

Legislation by the people in such wise that no legislative proposa shall become law until ratified by the majority of the people.

Legislative and Administrative independence for all parts of the Empire.

Financial and Fiscal.

Repudiation of the National Debt.

Abolition of all indirect taxation and the institution of a cumulative tax on all incomes and inheritances exceeding £300.

Administrative.

Extension of the principle of Local Self-Government.

Systematisation and co-ordination of the local administrative bodies.

Election of all administrators and administrative bodies by Equal Direct Adult Suffrage.

Educational.

Elementary education to be free, secular, industrial and compulsory for all classes. The age of obligatory school attendance to be raised to 16.

Unification and systematisation of intermediate and higher education, both general and technical, and all such education to be free.

Free Maintenance for all attending State schools.

Abolition of school rates; the cost of education in all State schools to be borne by the National Exchequer.

Public Monopolies and Services.

Nationalisation of the land and the organisation of Labour in agriculture and industry under public ownership and control on co-operative principles.

Nationalisation of the Trusts.

Nationalisation of Railways, Docks, and Canals, and all great means of transit.

Public ownership and control of Gas, Electric Light, and Water supplies, as well as of Tramway, Omnibus and other locomotive services.

Public ownership and control of the food and coal supply.

The establishment of State and municipal banks and pawnshops and public restaurants.

Public ownership and control of the lifeboat service.

Public ownership and control of hospitals, dispensaries, cemeteries and crematoria.

Public ownership and control of the drink traffic.

Labour.

A legislative eight-hour working day, or 48 hours per week, to be the maximum for all trades and industries. Imprisonment to be inflicted on employers for any infringement of the law.

Absolute freedom of combination for all workers, with legal guarantee against any action, private or public, which tends to curtail or infringe it

No child to be employed in any trade or occupation until 16 years of age, and imprisonment to be inflicted on employers, parents, and guardians who infringe this law.

Public provision of useful work at not less than trade union rates of wages for the unemployed.

Free State Insurance against sickness and accident, and free and adequate State pensions or provision for aged and disabled workers. Public assistance not to entail any forfeiture of political rights.

The legislative enactment of a minimum wage of 30s. for all workers. Equal pay for both sexes for the performance of equal work.

Social.

Abolition of the present workhouse system, and reformed administration of the Poor Law on a basis of national co-operation.

Compulsory construction by public bodies of healthy dwellings for the people; such dwellings to be let at rents to cover the cost of construction and maintenance alone, and not to cover the cost of the land.

The administration of justice to be free to all; the establishment of public offices where legal advice can be obtained free of charge.

Miscellaneous.

The disestablishment and disendowment of all State churches.

The abolition of standing armies, and the establishment of national citizen forces. The people to decide on peace and war.

The establishment of international courts of arbitration.

The abolition of courts-martial: all offences against discipline to be transferred to the jurisdiction of civil courts.

RULES.—Members.

1. Intending members must make written application upon the prescribed form to a branch of the Organisation.

2. A member shall belong to one branch only.

3. A member shall not pay less than 2d. per week to the branch.

4. Members 13 weeks in arrear shall be struck off the books after written notices have been sent to them by the branch and a further 14 days have elapsed, unless a satisfactory explanation be given, and shall not be allowed to join any other branch whilst those arrears remain unpaid.

5. No member shall accept fees for lecturing for the Organisation other than those recognised by or received through the Executive Council.

Branches.

6. Any branch may be formed by not less than six persons making written application on the prescribed form to the Executive Council and receiving their sanction.

7. Branches shall elect their own officers and may draw up such bye-laws as they may deem necessary for their internal management, provided they do not clash with the Rules and Policy of the Federation.

8. Branches shall report progress to the Executive Council at least once a quarter.

9. Branches must send one-half of the minimum contributions received from members to the Central Office not later than seven days after the expiration of each month.

10. Branches may remit or reduce the contributions of sick or unemployed members.

11. Disputes between branches shall be submitted to a Committee appointed by the Executive Council, who shall report to the Executive Council. The decision of the Executive Council shall be binding, with a right of appeal to the next Annual or Extraordinary Conference.

12. It shall be the duty of branch secretaries, upon the acceptance of a member not residing in their district, to at once inform the secretary of the branch (if any) in the district from which the member has come.

Annual Conference.

13. A National Conference shall be held annually to decide the policy for the ensuing year, make rules and deal with alterations on every third year, carry out the object and programme of the Federation, decide all appeals against decisions of the Executive Council, and elect the Executive Council and all paid officials, all of whom shall be nominated by the branches.

14. Notice of the date and place of each Annual Conference shall be advertised in *Justice* for at least three months beforehand.

15. The Conference shall consist of branch delegates in the proportion of one for every 50 or part of 50 members. Branches which are entitled to send more than one Delegate may, if they are unable to pay the expenses of the full number of Delegates to which they may be entitled, record their full number of votes through their one Delegate. Delegates must have been members for at least the twelve months immediately preceding the Conference.

16. Representation shall be refused to Branches three months in arrear with their subscriptions, and no items for the Agenda shall be accepted from such Branches.

17. Delegates from Branches which have not been in existence more than six months shall not vote without the permission of the majority of the other Delegates.

18. Each Conference shall fix the date and place of the next.

19. An Extraordinary Conference may be summoned by the Executive Council or on demand of a tenth of the total branches. Representation at such shall be the same as at Annual Conferences.

Referendum.

20. A poll of the Organisation may be taken at any time by the Executive Council or at the request of not less than six branches sending a requisition, stating the matter upon which they desire that a poll should be taken. The result shall have the same effect as a resolution of the Annual Conference.

Executive Council.

21. This shall consist of twenty-four members, twelve of whom shall be members of different provincial branches. The twelve provincial members of the Executive Council shall have supplied to them before each meeting an agenda of all business to be considered at such meeting. Provincial members unable to attend the Council meetings personally shall have the right to record their votes by letter. Nominations shall only be made by the branches, and must be sent to the General Secretary at least six weeks before the date of each Conference, together with the candidate's written consent to nomination, the name of the branch to which he (or she) belongs, and the length of his (or her) membership of the S.D.F. No member with less than twelve months' membership shall be eligible for nomination.

22. The Executive Council shall be elected at the Annual Conference by ballot.

23. In the case of an election to fill a vacancy on the E.C., a request for nominations shall be given in *Justice*. Nominations must reach the General Secretary within two weeks of the appearance of this notice. The General Secretary shall at once send such nominations to the branches to be voted upon. The voting papers shall be returned, and the voting closed three weeks from the date of despatch of the voting papers. The second ballot shall apply to elections within the S.D.F.

24. The seat of any member of the Executive Council who is absent from three consecutive meetings shall be declared vacant unless a satisfactory explanation is given.

25. The Executive Council shall carry out all decisions of Annual and Extraordinary Conferences and enforce the rules. They shall in no way go against the constitution and general policy of the Federation. They shall meet at least once a fortnight; seven members to form a quorum. The agenda of business to be considered at all meetings of the Executive Council shall be posted to all members at least three days before meeting. The Executive Council shall make a quarterly report to the branches. The names of all members shall be signed to every official document passed by the Executive Council, not necessarily for publication.

Committees.

26. Finance, Parliamentary Organisation, and International Committees shall be appointed by the Executive Council, who shall define their powers and duties. Members need not be members of the Executive Council, but no member of the Executive Council shall be on more than two Committees.

Officers.

27. These shall consist of a General Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, and two Auditors, who shall be nominated by the branches and elected by the Annual Conference in the same manner as the Executive Council.

28. The General Secretary shall keep the accounts, record the minutes of the Executive Council Meetings, Annual and Extraordinary